

# Restaurant to Open After Labor Trouble

DEC 31 1971

Francesco's Restaurant is expected to reopen today for New Year's Eve business following a two-day shutdown by Hotel and Restaurant Employees and Bartenders Local 28.

Owner Dewey Bargiacchi was able to reopen the lounge yesterday after obtaining a court order stopping Local 28's picketing, but was unable to serve dinner until today.

U.S. District Judge Cecil Poole signed a temporary restraining order late Wednesday directing Local 28 officials to call off pickets at the popular Hegenberger Road restaurant. A hearing is scheduled for next Thursday on whether to make the order permanent.

Bargiacchi said he also plans to sue Local 28 for about \$7,500 per day in damages for business lost during the shutdown.

The dispute began when a

busboy was fired for "not handling his station correctly," after having been given three written warnings, Bargiacchi said.

He said the union refused to let the matter go through grievance procedures spelled out in the contract.

# \$5,000 for return of stolen guns

JAN 8 1981  
Dewey Bargiacchi, owner of Francesco's restaurant on Hegenberger Road in Oakland, is offering a \$5,000 reward for the return of his valuable gun collection, taken during a burglary.

Bargiacchi said the guns, all Colts, were Centennial pieces worth more than \$50,000. They included .38- and .45-caliber revolvers, some with pearl-handle grips.

The burglary occurred late Sunday night when the front doors to the restaurant were smashed in. The thieves broke into a glass case housing the weapons and fled before police arrived.

Police Sgt. Zeddie Williams of the burglary detail is handling the investigation.





**JANET**

**FLETCHER**

FRI FEB 8 1985

The Oakland airport is currently doing a big public relations job on itself, complete with billboards and radio ads. And with the bargain-priced People's Express departing daily from Oakland International, the airport is probably seeing more business than ever. If you happen to have an unexpectedly long wait there, you could do worse than pop over to nearby Francesco's, a loosely Italian restaurant in the ubiquitous "Joe's" style.

How do you know a "Joe's" by another name?

There's the open kitchen, with a line of rapid-fire saute chefs. There's counter seating, from which you can watch the pyrotechnics and the leaping saute pans. There are waiters in incongruous tuxedos, and sometimes, waitresses who look like they've been around the block a few times.

There's a huge menu, which invariably features pasta and veal parmigiana, a grilled hamburger sandwich and calves' liver. And there's always "Joe's Special" (here, "Francesco's Special"): ground beef, spinach, onions and eggs in a mad stir-fry originally attributed to Joe Vanessi. It's Italian food, sort of.

Francesco's is cut from the very same pattern. You get the feeling that everyone around you has been coming here for years, and that your waiter would pull out pictures of the kids if you asked.

The food is solid, no-frills fare, served abundantly, and the customers love it. It's not cheap, but if it's quantity you're after, you'll get your dollar's worth.

The grill chefs know a thing or two about calves' liver, cooking it precisely to your order, then topping it liberally with bacon, sauteed onions or mushrooms — or all three. Now that's good eating!

And to complete this mammoth serving, you have your choice: spaghetti, ravioli or vegetables — all of them pretty sorry in my experience. Better to pay the supplemental charge for a side of good fresh sauteed spinach.

You can hardly go wrong with the daily specials: old-fashioned dishes and full-flavored stews that hard to find at other restaurants. When was the last time you saw "pot roast" on a menu? It's pretty tasty stuff here, although I'd prefer it without a blanket of tomato sauce.

Even better is Thursday's Tripe 'a la Toscana,' a soulful, gutsy braise that might well have been slowly simmering all day long. How sweet it is: tender tripe stewed for hours with chunks of celery, green pepper and onion, the whole laced with a rich, herby, peppery tomato sauce. Mamma mia!

Other Italian favorites where you might expect the kitchen to shine are disappointments: the Minestrone, for example, and the Calamari Saute with Linguine — a plate of tender, well-sauced noodles topped with tough-as-leather squid.

The house salad is a lackluster production of iceberg lettuce, garbanzos and kidney beans in an overly vinegared vinaigrette.

The wine list is dreary, and the ice cream takes the cake: it's scooped beforehand and stuck back in the freezer, where it forms a nice little skin and saves the waiter about 30 seconds. "This tastes like it was scooped up a long time ago," I said to my waitress one evening. "No, hon, I scooped it myself just this morning!"

Nevertheless, Francesco's has character, a loyal following and a kitchen that puts out some good hearty grub. A pre-flight meal here should sustain you at least halfway around the globe.

Francesco's, Hegenberger Road and Pardee Drive, Oakland, 569-0653. Open Monday through Friday from 11 a.m. to 11:30 p.m., and Saturday from 4 to 11:30 p.m. Credit cards accepted. Wheelchair access. Full bar. Reservations accepted. Dinner for two, with wine, tax and tip: \$40. "Joe's"-style restaurant near the Oakland airport: solid, no-frills fare, in hefty portions.



# WWII Army pals are together again in a happier milieu

SUN APR 17 1988

## Restaurateur hires buddy as maitre d'

By Ed Levitt  
The Tribune

A pair of old Army buddies from the 1940s are together again — but this time in a more joyous atmosphere.

Now they're surrounded by food-filled platters and happily-munching people.

Before they saw mainly rifle-packing platoons and ditch-digging draftees.

Mitch Hoffman met Dewey Bargiacchi when both were stationed at the Presidio in Monterey during World War II.

"We became friends — and to be Dewey's friend then meant you got plenty to eat and drink if you came to Oakland on a weekend pass," Hoffman relates.

"Dewey's mother, Josephine, owned the North Pole restaurant in West Oakland. She treated us royally when we came to town."

Now, some 45 years later, Dewey Bargiacchi, owner of Francesco's restaurant near the Oakland Coliseum, has hired Hoffman as his night maitre d'.

"The time was right," Bargiacchi says. "We were inseparable in the Army. Now we're inseparable at Francesco's."

Bargiacchi admits "it's good business hiring Mitch. He knows lots of people. They're all coming to see him."

Hoffman has run restaurants (Mitch's and The Sirloin) as well as the Gentlemen Chefs, a table-hopping Eastbay group that

## Eastbay PEOPLE

flourished in the '50s and '60s.

The San Francisco Chamber of Commerce picked 13 of the area's best young swimmers to take part in the Golden Gate Bridge's opening ceremonies in 1937 — and Hoffman was one.

He recalls swimming the gate span with his brother, Mark.

"We each went out on a boat, rubbed grease over our bodies and swam the one-mile span in 40 minutes amidst all the celebration. It was easy," he says.

His next big splash came in 1943 — and it rated headlines.

As a member of the Army basketball team at the Monterey Presidio, Hoffman faced the famed Harlem Globetrotters.

"We put together a top group of college stars. But the Trotters had streaked to 918 straight wins. They even beat the great Minneapolis Lakers. But they couldn't handle our guys. We won by 12 points."

The team from the Monterey Presidio rolled on to win the Army championship. "It was the most exciting time of my life."

Once out of the Army, he worked at the St. Francis Hotel and later managed the Senator Hotel in Sacramento.

Then in 1947, he got a call to

help Josephine Bargiacchi at her newly opened Villa de la Paix restaurant in Oakland.

"Josephine taught me the restaurant business. I worked five years for her. Then I went out on my own," he says.

He opened Mitch's in downtown Oakland. "I saw many colorful characters, but Bozo Miller was the greatest. If there was a birthday celebration, he'd come in and leave a bottle of champagne at everybody's table.

"I kept the restaurant going 14 years before moving to Lake Tahoe to manage the Cal-Neva Lodge. I helped put on shows featuring Tony Bennett, Robert Goulet, Connie Francis.

"Sinatra was the landlord at

the time. He was my boss. But I never saw him. That's the time he got into trouble with the Nevada Gaming Commission."

Hoffman returned to Oakland and, along with Jim Costello, opened The Sirloin. "Raider boss Al Davis came in so often I installed a table phone for his convenience. I had the restaurant 18 years, then sold the place.

"People think owning a restaurant is glamorous: You sit at the bar, meet beautiful women and smile all the way to the bank," he says.

"In reality, it's just hard work. After 40 years in the restaurant business, I burned out. The long hours, the daily grind finally caught up with me. It helped

shorten my marriage."

The marriage produced a son, Michael, who works for the Department of Commerce.

Hoffman lives in Oakland's Hiller Highlands, where his townhouse is filled with pictures of celebrities he has met.

"I enjoyed a colorful but hard-working life. I can't regret a thing at this stage of the game.

"I feel happy as long I can play tennis, swim and put in just a regular shift doing what I love at the restaurant.

"Now I occupy the best of all worlds — working for my old Army pal who knows and understands how I operate. There's no financial risk. That's important for a kid of 68."